



Senator Dianne Feinstein
Statement for the BRAC Commission
Regional Hearing
Los Angeles, California
July 14, 2005

(Read by Jim Molinari, State Director)

It is my pleasure to welcome all of you to Los Angeles.

I am sorry that I am unable to be there with you today as the Senate is in session, but I know that California's interests will be well-represented by Governor Schwarzenegger, the Chairs of the California Council on Base Support and Retention, and all of the Community Based Organizations and elected officials here today.

I would first like to bring to your attention a letter from the California Congressional Delegation to the BRAC Commission thanking you for holding this Regional Hearing and expressing our unified support for those who will testify today.

Attached to this letter is written testimony from a number of local communities demonstrating each base's military significance, as well as the overwhelming support for the military in California.

(I would ask that these materials be added to the Record.)

Please know that we all stand united in our commitment to this nation's military and the State's unique ability to support the present and future needs of our national defense. We believe with certainty that California is better suited than any other state to meet these vital needs.

The report that the Governor presented earlier to the Commission provides clear examples of the interconnectedness that makes California so uniquely important to our national security and future military transformation.

Today, you will get a taste of what Californians already know:

- California's military installations have extraordinarily high military value;
- They all make vital contributions to a strong national defense;
- They operate at relatively low cost;
- They have excellent facilities;
- They have skilled workforces; and
- They provide their personnel with excellent quality of life.

Although this latest round of BRAC recommendations are not as devastating to California as previous rounds, I remain very concerned about those communities that face closure or downsizing and will do all I can to soften the blow.

According to the Pentagon's BRAC recommendations, California could face a net loss of 2,018 jobs as the result of the proposed closure of 11 military installations, plus a number of significant realignments.

It is incumbent upon the BRAC Commission over the coming weeks to determine whether the proposed recommendations by the Pentagon are in the best interest of our future defense and national security.

You, as members of the BRAC Commission, are the only people who can make sure that these closures and realignments do not leave a hole in our nation's ability to protect itself from future threats.

Congress can only vote the final list down; we cannot edit it. That is your unique, critical responsibility.

Your work in reviewing and modifying the Pentagon's list will enable Congress to move this process forward in a way that will ensure the safety and security of our nation.

After today's hearing, as this BRAC round moves ahead, I encourage you to stay involved and work with the Pentagon to ensure that the manner in which bases are closed is fair and transparent.

Unfortunately, the transfer of closed bases in the previous four BRAC rounds has been slow and cumbersome.

Environmental clean-up has been difficult. Each base is handled separately. It is a gut-wrenching process for local communities and those of us in Congress who want to help them.

Only about half of the 72,000 acres that were closed in California during the earlier BRAC rounds have been conveyed to local authorities for reuse. And it will cost about \$2 billion to complete the remaining clean-up of previously closed bases in California.

As Ranking Member of the Military Construction and Veterans' Affairs Subcommittee, I face the issue of the environmental mitigation of closed bases on a regular basis. We need to keep our promises to communities – those affected in this coming BRAC round – as well as those still struggling to move on from actions taken in the earlier rounds.

Again, I want to thank the BRAC Commission, the entire California Congressional Delegation, Governor Schwarzenegger and the State delegation, Community Based Groups, local elected officials, and everyone here today for their time and effort in preparing for this hearing.

Thank you.